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ABSTRACT

Arguing that systematic analysis of message strategies ought to become a major focus of study within the field of speech communication, this paper offers a limited case study to illustrate the kinds of strategies that might be uncovered. The paper places the illustration within a persuasive context and indicates the kinds of approaches a speaker might use in response to a listener's belief that he or she is not the kind of person who supports the advocated position. The first approach discussed is "altercasting" (making salient roles or beliefs that are in agreement with the advocated position and which the listener might be willing to ascribe to himself or herself). The second approach offered reflects an attempt to change the view the listener holds of supporters of the advocated position. The final strategy discussed involves an attempt to change particular aspects of the self-concepts of the listener in such a way as to facilitate agreement with the advocated position. (Author/FL)

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ANALYSIS OF TOPOI: A CASE STUDY IN MANAGING THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSUADEE

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Abstract

The thesis advanced is that systematic analysis of message strategies ought to become one major focus of study within our field. In this paper, a limited case study illustrates the kinds of strategies which might be uncovered. The illustration is set within a persuasive context, and indicates the kinds of approaches a speaker might use in response to the belief on the part of the persuadees that "I'm just not the kind of person who holds the advocated view." Specific lines of argument are suggested for three major strategies to attempt to alter this belief. The first approach is altercasting, i.e., making salient aspects of the persuadees' self concepts which facilitate agreement with the advocated position. The second approach reflects an attempt to change the view the persuadees hold of supporters of the advocated position. The final strategy involves an attempt to change particular aspects of the self concepts of the persuadees in such a way as to facilitate agreement.

Those of us who received graduate training in speech prior to the 1970's quite likely recall Donald C. Bryant's well known definition of rhetoric as "the adjusting of ideas to people and people to ideas."[1] Our exposure to classical rhetoric gave meaning to this definition. Adaptation involved selecting from a general system of topoi, or commonly recurring lines of argument and ways of casting ideas, those particular lines of argument the speaker deemed appropriate to the given situation.

By 1970, however, our field had shifted interest sharply from the classical rhetorical tradition toward a psychological orientation. Thus our present graduate students typically are capable of describing the nature of meaning and processes of attitude formation, attribution, and interaction. But with the exception of a small number of students, most do not command any system of message strategies which enables adaptation to be accomplished. Those in our field who are currently focusing on messages, such as discourse analysts, tend to place greater emphasis on structural features of the message than on recurring lines of argument.

Need for Focus on Message Strategies

Elsewhere we have argued for renewed concern with message strategies.[2] Certainly we do not propose that we abandon interest in the underlying psychological processes involved in communication. Rather, we seek systematic analysis of message strategies grounded within a framework which isolates important general underlying processes and structures involved in strategic communication. By the term "strategies" we do not mean attempts at manipulation, but rather something more akin to the classical notion of topoi, i.e., routines or recurring lines of argument and ways of casting ideas. Selection of such strategies need not be conscious, though it may be.[3] Our views of the nature of strategic aspects of communication and interaction and the relationship of consciously strategic

aspects of communication and interaction are discussed by Delia, B. O'Keefe, and D. O'Keefe.[4]

It is also important to emphasize, as we have elsewhere, that in undertaking work on topoi and communicative strategies, it is not possible simply to revitalize classical topoi. Today our conception of speech events encompasses far more than messages addressed to public issues. For instance, any comprehensive system of message strategies would necessarily embody approaches used for interpersonal as well as public ends. Moreover, we consider it crucial that the kinds of analysis to be undertaken be systematic. Whereas classical topoi were lists of lines of argument with no particular order, we have suggested the possibility of organizing the search for strategies around specific communicative objectives. It may be possible to identify major recurring communication objectives. If there are recurrent obstacles to these objectives, i.e., beliefs of other interactants which prevent the speaker from achieving the desired objective, then it should be possible to specify typical lines of argument or forms of idea for changing these beliefs.

We have suggested further that every communicative situation involves objectives on three dimensions: instrumental, interpersonal, and identity. Put another way, it is our view that in any communicative situation, the speaker has a desire to achieve a particular task or instrumental goal, to establish or maintain a given interpersonal relationship with the other participants, and a desire to establish or maintain a particular view of him or herself. Quite likely the speaker would be unable to articulate these goals. Their existence is evident, however, in the feelings of satisfaction or frustration of the speaker during and at the conclusion of an encounter. If the speaker feels dissatisfied, most likely one or more of the objectives was not met. And it may be only in retrospect (if at all) that the speaker would be able to specify that objective.[5]

The pedagogical value of a systematic understanding of message strategies is obvious. It does little good to admonish our persuasion students to adapt to the views of their audience or to encourage our students in interpersonal communication to be empathic if they lack fundamental strategies for accomplishing these ends. Work in the development of communicative skills in children indicates clearly that it is quite possible to recognize the need for a general kind of communicative strategy (for example, to "be nicer") but to completely lack a repetoire of strategies for accomplishing this end.[6]

While some might fear that the study of alternative message strategies could encourage formulary communication, reflection indicates that such would not be possible. The student would have an expanded repetoire of options from which to choose, but would necessarily be required to assess the beliefs and views of others in the situation, to consider his or her own objectives, and to choose from the expanded repetoire. Thus the study of message strategies increases the students' flexibility and potential to achieve their desired ends, but the successful or appropriate use of these strategies in a specific context is contingent upon social-cognitive skills, ethical criteria, and a host of other factors.

For the researcher, a comprehensive system of message strategies would enrich the kinds of questions which could be posed. A scholar concerned with speaker styles, for instance, might attempt to identify individuals who tend to emphasize objectives in one major domain, interpersonal, for instance, regardless of the specific situation confronted. Similarly, it might be possible to find differences between the communication patterns of men and women which are more fundamental than the structure of questions or use of qualifiers.

A Case Study

Some General Considerations Concerning Identities and Strategic Communication

Elsewhere we have suggested the requirements and some alternative avenues

to uncovering these message strategies. Our purpose today is simply to provide one specific illustration of the kinds of strategies which such a pursuit could yield. The area we have chosen to display is a very narrow one, due to time limitations. For reasons related to our personal pedagogical interests, we have chosen to isolate strategies relevant to the management of the identity of the persons addressed in a persuasive situation.

Perhaps we should clarify our concept of identity management. In any communicative situation the speaker will have identity objectives which transcend that specific situation. For instance, if the speaker thinks of himself or herself as a considerate individual, this view constrains the selection of message strategies regardless of the specific instrumental objective. Moreover, the speaker may desire to assist other participants in maintaining a particular view of themselves, regardless of the specific instrumental objectives.[7]

There is another aspect of identity objectives, however, which is defined by the specific situation, and it is this more narrowly circumscribed type of goal with which we are concerned today. The speaker may attempt to alter or make salient a certain facet of the identity of other participants in an effort to facilitate the achievement of the speaker's instrumental objective. In the persuasive context, the speaker may attempt to engender the belief in the persuadees that they are the kind of person who appropriately supports the advocated position.

Traditionally, interest in identity management in persuasive situations has focused on the speaker, and more particularly, on the credibility of the speaker. The notion that the identity of the persuadee may be an important one in persuasion has received only scattered attention from attitude theorists. Daniel Katz's concept of the functions of attitude, in which he identifies ego expressiveness and ego defensiveness as two functions served by some attitudes, suggests that an individual may hold a position not simply because of the material consequences

of that position, but due to the implications for the individual's identity as well.[8] One of the component beliefs underlying attitudes in Triandis' analysis relates to the individual's identity. In operationalizing this component, the person is asked to consider whether he or she "is the kind of person who does this sort of thing."[9] Certainly personal reflection is likely to yield instances of times when we were reluctant to endorse a position because we felt such endorsement conflicts with our self image. Faculties may be split on the issue of unionization, for example, if some members find themselves unable to integrate union membership into their self concepts. And many women who sympathize with the objectives of the ERA withhold overt endorsement because they view supporters of ERA as unfeminine or unconcerned with traditional family values. The person addressed may never verbalize or perhaps even be aware of the source of resistance. Nevertheless, it seems likely that many persuasive attempts are unsuccessful because of the inability of the persuadee to view himself or herself as the kind of individual who would endorse the advocated position.

What follows, then, are message strategies available to the persuader who wishes to alter the view of the persuadee that they are not the kinds of people who support the proposed view. These strategies were not discovered in a systematic fashion, but rather were collected as materials to be used for teaching purposes. We are fully aware of the limitations of the methodology employed. But if such a preliminary approach has some utility, a systematic analysis should yield more comprehensive, and hence potentially more useful, lines of argument.

Message Strategies To Manage The Persuadee's Identity

To change the belief of persuadees that they are not the kinds of people who support the advocated view, we have identified three major lines of argument. The first typically has been labeled altercasting. Within this approach the

speaker implicitly argues that the persuadees are the kinds of individuals who support the advocated position, and the vehicle for this argument is making salient roles or beliefs which the persuadees might not otherwise attribute to themselves. The second major approach is to attempt to change the image of the supporters of an issue, i.e., to contend, again perhaps implicitly, that the persuadees hold a misconception about the kinds of people who endorse the advocated position. The final major approach is to attempt to change the image which the persuadees hold of themselves. This is perhaps the most difficult of the three alternatives, and would most likely be chosen only when the speaker views the self concepts of the persuadees as a genuine obstacle to achievement of the communicative objectives. For instance, if the speaker is faced with an audience whose self concepts are low, a group of people who feel so powerless that they assume they cannot change the situation at issue, the speaker may feel the only alternative is to attempt to raise the self esteem of the audience members to a level where they feel some control over the situation. Due to time limitations, we shall merely sketch briefly some variations which the speaker has available within each major approach.

Altercasting. The first alternative, altercasting, reflects an attempt on the part of the speaker to make salient a role or set of beliefs which the persuadees may be willing to ascribe to himself or herself, but which might not have spontaneously been salient. These attributes, must, of course, be conducive to the achievement of the speaker's ends. The most common and least subtle form of altercasting is simply to remind the persuadees of personal characteristics which are relevant to the current communicative situation and which facilitate the desired response. At a PTA meeting where members are being asked to donate time to improve the playground, for instance, the speaker may well address the audience as "Concerned Parents." Advertisers for years have relied heavily on indirect forms of this tech-

nique, assuming that women in the audience, for example, will see themselves as mothers who provide only the most nutritious and tasty snacks to their children.

Probably less common than this straightforward form of altercasting is to focus attention of persuadees on an aspects of their self concept which is not salient in the present circumstance and which may even conflict with their self image within the current situation. For instance, the speaker might use such an approach in trying to convince a group of college students to support a city council ordinance which would prevent housing close to the campus to be converted into apartments available to students. Before proposing such a restriction, the speaker might enjoin the audience to recall their hometown neighborhood, the quiet street, litter free yards, and the absence of loud music and late parties. In such a way the speaker might be able to lead the audience to view themselves as community members rather than college students with interests in conflict with the proposed position.

Sometimes the speaker will attempt to lead the audience to think of themselves in an entirely new light, but in a way which they find quite acceptable. Here the strategy may take the form of providing a composite set of traits which the persuadees will view as an acceptable image they had not reflected upon previously. George Wallace's presidential bid relied heavily on creating such an identity for the common working person: an individual who works hard, has sensible ideas, is capable of knowing what is good for him or herself without being told so by guideline writers in Washington, in sum, one who wishes to regain control over his or her own life.[10] For many, these traits were already a latent part of their self concepts. Wallace made this self image explicit and associated these self attributions with being a Wallace supporter.

Perhaps more uncommon than the foregoing variations on altercasting is attribution of undesirable traits to an audience for the purpose of jolting them into willingness to take action. Clearly such an approach incurs the risk of negative

reaction toward the speaker. At times, however, the speaker may willingly take this risk. Malcolm X frequently referred to his black audiences as gut eaters in an effort to impress upon them that they had permitted the white man to suppress them.[11] He hoped their angry reaction would energize an attitude of rebellion.

Regardless of the specific form of altercasting, its success in leading to the desired response from the persuadee appears to be contingent upon two major factors. First, the attribution must be viewed as plausible. If the audience rejects the legitimacy of the attribution, the response may be hostility and entrenchment. For instance, we suspect many nonsmokers object to the campaign of the American Tobacco Institute to label individuals who prefer to avoid smoke under some circumstances as "Anti-smokers" who enjoy rutabagas and have encouraged the diversion of needed monies for medical research to the building of unnecessary structures to segregate smokers and non-smokers.[12] Secondly, the attribution must be one which in fact facilitates acceptance of the speaker's advocated position. We suspect, for instance, that many commonplace efforts at altercasting are ineffective because the attributed role or belief either is unimportant to the individuals addressed, or because the attribution carries with it no clearly defined responses. Consider such standard labels such as "concerned citizens," "fellow American," and "future leaders." Those addressed may not object to being so labeled, but at the same time find these attributes so peripheral to their own images that the roles carry almost no impetus to action or to alter a response.

Change Image of Supporters of a Position. Within the general approach of altercasting, the persuader assumes that the persuadees view the image of supporters of the advocated position as generally acceptable, and hence the task is to increase the association of the persuadees' own self concepts with the image of these supporter

The second general approach to managing the identity of the persuadee, however, requires quite a different assumption. Within this approach, the persuader recognizes that the persuadees view supporters of the advocated position negatively and attempts to alter the conception which the persuadees hold of these supporters. Thus the underlying line of argument becomes "You misjudge the nature of individuals who support the advocated position." As with any of the lines of argument being discussed, the persuader may choose to avoid explicit statement of such a position, preferring to let the audience infer that they have been inaccurate in their judgment by providing carefully chosen examples which implicate in the desired inference.

The speaker may select from a variety of alternatives the specific avenue for changing the image of supporters of the advocated position. One of the simplest approaches is to label the advocated position in such a way as to circumvent associations with individuals the persuadees may find unacceptable. For instance, a segment of the vigorous fundamentalist Christian movement we are witnessing currently has elected to label itself "charismatic" rather than "pentecostal" to avoid negative associations. The older term carries for many people the implication of individuals who are anti-intellectual, perhaps even believers in witchcraft. By choosing a new categorization, leaders of this movement have greater freedom to mold a new image.

The persuader may elect to refute directly misconceptions or negative attributions of supporters of the advocated position. Some Americans, we suspect, find it easier to align their views with Israel than the Palestinian Liberation Organization, not for substantitive reasons, but because our stereotype of Israelis is one of well educated, hard working, independent individuals. By contrast, we may view Palestinians as lower-class nomads with radical views. If we are confronted with a profile of Palestinians as the intellectual elite of the Arab nations, we may be more amenable to changing our views with respect to the substantive issues.

Frequently, however, the persuader relies on the technique of identifying specific supporters of a position to indicate that they possess characteristics quite different from those which the audience typically attributes to supporters of the position, and moreover, characteristics which the audience finds acceptable. Suppose the speaker were urging the adoption of a vegetarian diet and was confronted with a group of people who saw the implications as far broader than health concerns. They might view vegetarians as the kind of individuals who read Eastern philosophy rather than watching Monday night football. To change this image, the persuader might detail the views of Bill Walton, the professional basketball player, who is a strong supporter of a vegetarian diet. Similarly, a persuader confronted with a college faculty who think of unions as being for auto workers or truck drivers might attempt to stress the numbers of public school teachers who belong to unions, or argue for the similarity between the American Medical Association and groups identified as unions.

Far more complex than the foregoing approaches to altering the image of supporters for a position is the attempt to create a new identity altogether for such supporters; this kind of strategy will typically involve use of illustrations of the nature of those with the advocated identity. Perhaps one of the most skillful attempts to execute this approach was Malcom X's description of the House Negro and the Field Negro. In this passage, Malcom had a dual purpose of presenting a strong positive image of the supporters of the Muslim movement while simultaneously creating an image in ineffectuality for the followers of the moderate movement headed by Martin Luther King. Malcom avoided any direct reference to King, but it takes little effort to recognize that the moderate movement headed by King was being cast as the House Negro, the dupe of the white man:

> To understand this, you have to go back to what the young brother here referred to as the house Negro and the field Negro back during slavery. There were two kinds of slaves, the house Negro and the field Negro.

The house Negroes--they lived in the house with master, they dressed pretty good, they ate good because they ate his food--what he left. They lived in the attic or the basement, but still they lived near the master; and they loved the master more than the master loved himself. They would give their life to save the master's house--quicker than the master would. If the master said, "We got a good house here," the house Negro would say, "Yeah, we got a good house here." Whenever the master said "we," he said "we." That's how you can tell a house Negro.

If the master's house caught on fire, the house Negro would fight harder to put the blaze out than the master would. If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, "What's the matter, boss, we sick?" We sick! He identified himself with his master, more than his master identified with himself. And if you came to the house Negro and said, "Let's run away, let's escape, let's separate," the house Negro would look at you and say, "Man, you crazy. What you mean, separate? Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than this? Where can I eat better food than this?" That was that house Negro. In those days he was called a "house nigger." And that's what we call them today, because we've still got some house niggers running around here.

This modern house Negro loves his master. He wants to live near him. He'll pay three times as much as the house is worth just to live near his master, and then brag about "I'm the only Negro out here." "I'm the only one on my job." "I'm the only one in this school." You're nothing but a house Negro. And if someone comes to you right now and says, "Let's separate," you say the same thing that the house Negro said on theplantation. "What you mean, separate? From America, this good white man? Where you going to get a better job than you get here?" I mean, this is what you say. "I ain't left nothing in Africa," that's what you say. Why, you left your mind in Africa.

On that same plantation, there was the field Negro. The field Negroes--those were the masses. There were always more Negroes in the field than there were Negroes in the house. The Negro in the field caught hell. He ate leftovers. In the house they ate high up on the hog. The Negro in the field didn't get anything but what was left of the insides of the hog. They call it "chitt'lings" nowadays. In those days they called them what they were--guts. That's what you were--gut-eaters. And some of you are still gut-eaters.

The field Negro was beaten from morning to night; he lived in a shack, in a hut; he wore old, castoff clothes. He hated his master. I say he hated his master. He was intelligent. That house Negro loved his master, but that field Negro--remember, they were in the majority, and they hated the master. When the house caught on fire, he didn't try to put it out; that field Negro prayed for a wind, for a breeze. When the master got sick, the field Negro prayed that he'd die. If someone came to the field Negro and said, "Let's separate, let's run," he didn't say "Where we going?" He'd say, "Any place is better than here." You've got field Negroes in America today. I'm a field Negro. The masses are the field Negroes.

> When they see this man's house on fire, you don't hear the little Negroes talking about "our government is in trouble." They say, "The government is in trouble." Imagine a Negro: "Our government"! I even heard one say "our astronauts." They won't even let him near the plant--and "our astronauts"! "Our Navy"--that's a Negro that is out of his mind, a Negro that is out of his mind.
>
> Just as the slavemaster of that day used Tom, the house Negro, to keep the field Negroes in check, the same old slavemaster today has Negroes who are nothing but modern Uncle Toms, twentieth-century Uncle Toms, to keep you and me in check, to keep us under control, keep us passive and peaceful and nonviolent. That's Tom making you nonviolent.[14]

Alter Self Concepts of Persuadees. Beyond the general approaches of alter-casting and changing the image of supporters of the advocated position, the third major alternative for management of the persuadee's identity available to the speaker is to attempt to alter the self concepts of the persuadees themselves. At times this change simply takes the form of an attempt to gain allegiance to a group or to form a general alliance where such allegiance will entail endorsement of a desired position. The approaches to be taken will vary depending on the nature of the relationship between speaker and audience. Efforts to gain an initial alliance, as we currently are seeing in the rhetoric of heads of state as interests are being realigned, differ from attempts to heal divisions in groups, exemplified regularly in the post-primary rhetoric of political parties.

At other times the effort to alter the self concept of the persuadees will be directed toward a specific element of that image which precludes the desired response. For instance, the speaker may attempt to convince the persuadees that they are individuals capable of withstanding the pressure of endorsing an unpopular position, or that they are decisive enough to take an unequivocal stand at this time, or that they really do feel responsible for the welfare of others. Needless to say, the specific beliefs which may function as obstacles to the speaker are conceptually limitless, though once again, some such beliefs recur with

sufficient frequency to render them amenable to systematic study.

The belief we have selected to use for illustrative purposes is one frequently confronted by advocates for social movements among groups who have suffered some form of suppression. The belief takes the form of feelings of inferiority and lack of power to improve their circumstances. If the speaker has any hope of mobilizing such individuals, they must be provided with a sense of self worth and of control over the source of their suppression.

Efforts to change the image of ineffectuality may begin by forcing the individuals to acknowledge their membership in the suppressed group so that they must confront these feelings of inferiority directly. Malcolm X told his grass roots audience:

> You don't catch hell because you're a Baptist, and you don't catch hell because you're a Methodist...You don't catch hell because you're a Democrat or a Republican, and you don't catch hell because you're a Mason or an Elk, and you sure don't catch hell because you're an American; because if you were an American, you wouldn't catch hell. You catch hell because you're a black man.[14]

The inescapability of identification with the group can be intensified by elaborating how others view members of the audience with disdain. George Wallace constantly reminded his campaign followers that they were called red necks, pea pickers, and peckerwoods by leaders of the major parties.[15]

This negative view which others hold, and which the individuals addressed have accepted, can then be attributed to the direct attempts of the suppressors to dupe the suppressed into a state of submission for the advantage of those in dominance. Louis Lomax described how the white man misled Blacks in this way:

> So they ran around with calipers and slide rules and yard sticks and tape measures, measuring black heads to see how long they were, and how wide they were. And they came up with the amazing conclusion: Poor little black thing--he can't think."
>
> ...as a result of this, you begin to believe it...We went around straightening our hair...We spent a fortune on bleaching creams trying to change our complexions; and those Negroes who were lighter skinned than other Negroes walked around with their noses in the air saying, "Although I am colored, I am less colored than thou art."[16]

Once group members have been forced to recognize that they have accepted a negative image of themselves, the speaker must provide reasons for changing this view, for instilling a sense of pride and of power. Malcolm X chose the approach of talking about the success of revoluations around the world, arguing that where suppressed minorities had risen up, they had been capable of overcoming their oppressors.[17] Louis Lomax elected to detail specific accomplishments of Blacks throughout history in his well known passage which has subsequently been echoed by other Black leaders:

> This white man is crazy. He may not know it, but I'm somebody... If you go back deeply enough into my African past--I don't know about you, but I can tell from the way I walk and the way I feel some mornings that my old folks way back in Africa were kings and princes. And when I dig back into my past, I find out that I was teaching mathematics and geometry, and plotting the course of the stars in the skies when the white man of Europe was still living in the caves of England and running from the Romans. I came to this country before he did, and I marched with Cortez right through here down into Mexico. When Governor Barnett was nothing but a wicked gleam in his great-grandfather's eye, I walked into the Mississippi Valley with the French. I'm somebody. And I came to this country, some slave, some free, but all black, and I was always somebody. When this country was ready to die, to break the chains of colonialism, I, Louis Lomax, black man, in Crispus Attucks, was the first man to die on Bostom Commons to get these white folks free from England. I'm somebody. In Phyllis Wheatley I taught them how to write poetry. In Paul Lawrence Dunbar I taught them the rhythms of anguish. In Frederick Douglass I taught them the meaning of oratory. In Sojourner Truth I taught them the meaning of militancy. In Booker Washington I gave them one of the first philosophies of American education. In W. E. B. DuBois I said "Look, Western man, you'd better use your head and think."... I died on Flanders Field to make the world free and safe for democracy. And I came back with my head bloodied, but still held high. And in Jesse Owens I beat him running. In Marion Anderson I beat him singing. I Joe Louis I beat him fighting. In Jackie Robinson I beat him playing baseball...And in Ralph Bunche I'll run the world if you'll move over and get out of the way. I'm somebody.[18]

This generalized sense of power may be followed by an illustration of the specific ways in which the group at hand has the capability to control the source of their suppression. George Wallace, for instance, repeatedly emphasized that "there are more of us than there are of them,"[19] indicating that there are greater

numbers of working class citizens than "effite snobs," as he termed his opposition. Similarly, Louis Lomax outlined the voting power of solidly Black areas.[20]

The foregoing line of argument can be intensified by showing that the oppressors themselves acknowledge and fear this power. Malcolm X argued vigorously that the march on Washington headed by Martin Luther King had been coopted from the militant grass roots movement among Blacks by John F. Kennedy because Kennedy feared the strength of the grass roots movement. Malcolm contended that this fear led Kennedy to invite King and other moderates as well as some whites, such as Walter Reuther, to spearhead the march in an effort to defuse the strength of the masses.[21]

Clearly these foregoing lines of argument designed to counteract a sense of lack of power are more specific than the strategies outlined in the first two major approaches (altercasting and changing the image of supporters). For rather than being general strategies, attempts to change specific beliefs of the persuadees' self concepts necessarily will be achieved by advancing an alternative set of beliefs. Nevertheless, it seems possible to identify a recurring pattern of argument, useful in responding to a commonly held belief which serves as an obstacle to persuasion. Hence analysis of these belief patterns would be profitable.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps other researchers will identify additional major approaches to managing the identity of the persuadee, and unquestionably other researchers will uncover more alternative lines of argument within each major approach. We recognize that the general line of work we advocate, the systematic discovery of message strategies, will never be exhaustive. It need not be, however, to have utility. The specific methodology employed in searching for message strategies will depend on the use to which the results are to be put. If the researcher is interested in developing a coding scheme for strategies typically used by a wide variety of individuals, he or she might ask large numbers of individuals to provide samples of

their responses to situations with a designated communicative objective. The responses could then be coded for the strategies employed. In most cases this will involve coding the strategies only along particular axes defined as relevant to particular theoretical questions.[22] For instance, the researcher might distinguish identity management strategies which defined a positive or negative identity for the persuadee. Just such an approach was taken by Kline and Delia in a recently completed study.[23] In this study, the distinction between positive and negative identity implications of strategies was augmented by considering the directness-indirectness of the evaluative altercasting. Thus, a dimension for coding evaluative altercasting was elaborated which ran from overt negative altercasting, through strategies which indirectly confirmed a positive identity, including a balance of positive and negative identity implications, and indirectly established a negative identity, to strategies which directly confirmed a negative identity. This theoretically based system, (which builds off of the kind of analysis suggested today while being much more systematic and circumscribed) was then used to test an hypothesis persuaders were high in cognitive concerning the effect of level of the persuader's social cognitive development on use of face-support vs. face-attack persuaders with more abstract systems of constructs for representing the identities of others provided greater face-support than did their less abstract counterparts).

In contrast to the foregoing approach, the researcher's aims may be primarily pedagogical. In such a case, the investigator is likely to be less interested in typical responses or in the use of theoretically-based coding dimensions, and more concerned with identifying strategies which seemingly have the greatest effectiveness for achieving a particular goal. In this case, the researcher might pursue an approach similar to the one displayed in our case study. We take this approach

to be a variant of genre criticism in which the genre is defined by a communicative objective.

It also should be emphasized in concluding that the analysis of message strategies is in no way limited to public discourse. In other work, for example, we have uncovered lines of argument individuals use when attempting to comfort another in distress in an interpersonal situation.[24] Our hope is simply that the present analysis of the management of the identity of the persuadee may serve to illustrate the potential utility of refocusing attention on significant features of strategic communication and/or on commonly recurring strategies within messages, for it is within and through such strategies that communication serves to create and restructure social definitions of reality.

FOOTNOTES

1. Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Functions and Scope," QJS, 39 (1953), 401-24.

2. Ruth Anne Clark and Jesse G. Delia, "Topoi and Rhetorical Competence," QJS, 65 (1979), 187-206.

3. It is important to emphasize that all "strategies" are not self-consciously strategic. While this may sound curious, it must be recognized that routines represent an important category of strategies. As aspects of social reality come to be defined and reaffirmed, these aspects are taken for granted. No longer at issue, the beliefs thus generated form the basis for routinized joint strategies for handling recurring situations in ongoing or socially formalized relationships. The extent to which these recurring joint strategies become tacitly held background understanding, rather than current issues, sets them apart as a unique set of strategies.

4. Jesse G. Delia, Barbara J. O'Keefe, and Daniel J. O'Keefe, "The Constructivist Approach to Communication," in Comparative Human Communication Theory, ed. Frank E. X. Dance (New York: Harper & Row, forthcoming).

5. Our views concerning the nature of fundamental objectives present in any communicative situation grow out of our constructivist conception of interaction processes. We see these objectives as fundamental issues recurrently faced in the interactional negotiation of social reality. Elsewhere we have noted that "in any interaction situation participants must generate norms governing conduct if interaction is to proceed smoothly. These negotiated understandings take the form of beliefs about what the situation is and beliefs which form general constraints on conduct within the situation. Some may be culturally given and taken for granted; however, all aspects of an interaction situation are at least potentially subject to negotiation. Hence, a variety of issues may arise in the course of interaction as social reality is constructed and reconstructed. The most fundamental issues implicit in every interaction concern the definition of the interaction situation itself. While only the overt topic of interaction is typically addressed directly, a series of other issues almost always is present (and may on occasion themselves become the focus of interaction). These other issues include some which recurrently become bases for situationally emergent constraints upon interaction,,e.g., the interactants' beliefs concerning their own and their interactional partners' identities and the nature of their relationships with one another. (Clark and Delia, pp. 192-193.) For fuller discussion of these aspects of our ideas see Jesse G. Delia and Barbara J. O'Keefe, "Constructivism: The Development of Communication in Children," in Children Communicating, ed. Ellen Wartella (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1979), pp. 157-185; James L. Applegate and Jesse G. Delia, "Person-Centered Speech, Psychological Development, and the Contexts of Language Usage," in The Social and Psychological Contexts of Language, eds. Robert St. Clair and Howard Giles (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, in press); and Delia, O'Keefe, and O'Keefe (f.n. 4).

6. Jesse G. Delia and Ruth Anne Clark, "Cognitive Complexity, Social Perception, and the Development of Listener-Adapted Communication in Six-, Eight-, Ten-, and Twelve-Year-Old Boys," CM, 44 (1977), 326-45.

7. Delia and B. O'Keefe (see f.n. 5) express our point here nicely: "The individual must create strategies which actualize his intentions, but which do so within the constraints imposed by contextually-constituted definitions given to situation, self, other relationship, and the focus of interaction. He must introduce his projects into the interactional agenda, securing for his concerns focused attention. The strategies generated thus must not only actualize his intentions, but also must be appropriate within the constantly emerging definition given to reality in interaction." (Delia and B. O'Keefe, p. 180-81).

8. Daniel Katz, "The Funcational Approach to the Study of Attitudes," Public Opinion Quarterly, 24 (1960), 163-204.

9. Harry C. Triandis, "Values, Attitudes and Interpersonal Behavior," in Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, 1979, eds. H. E. Howe and Monte Page (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).

10. George C. Wallace, Campaign Speech, Cape Girardeau, MO, September 18, 1968.

11. Malcolm X, "Message to the Grass Roots," in Malcolm X Speaks ed. George Breitman (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 11.

12. Advertisement, The Tobacco Institute, "A Word to Nonsmokers (about Smokers)," Newsweek, February 19, 1979, p. 79; the Tobacco Institute, "A Word to Smokers (about People who Build Walls)", Family Weekly, July 8, 1979, 15.

13. Malcolm X, 10-12.

14. Malcolm X, 4.

15. Wallace.

16. Lomax.

17. Malcolm X., 5-8.

18. Lomax.

19. Wallace.

20. Lomax.

21. Malcolm X, 13-17.

22. See the discussion in Clark and Delia.

23. Susan L. Kline and Jesse G. Delia, "Psychological Construing and the Use of Face-Support Strategies in a Persuasive Message," unpublished manuscript, Department of Speech Communication, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1979.

24. See Applegate and Delia.